

THE KING'S DREAM.

LESSON IX, SECOND QUARTER, INTERNATIONAL SERIES, MAY 29.

Text of the Lesson, Dan. ii, 30-45.
Memory Verse, 44—Golden Text, Heb. iv, 13—Commentary by the Rev. D. M. Stearns.

36. "This is the dream, and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king." Daniel offered to show the king both the dream and the interpretation; if he would give him time. Then Daniel and his companions gave themselves to prayer, and the secret was revealed unto Daniel in a night vision (verses 16-19); after which Daniel stands before the king, and giving all the credit to the God of heaven he tells the dream and is now about to give the interpretation (verses 27-35). Consider Joseph in a similar way glorifying God (Gen. xli, 15, 16). And as to dreams see Gen. xx, 3; xxxi, 24; xxxvii, 5, 9; xl, 5; I Kings iii, 5; Dan. iv, 5; vii, 1; Math. i, 20; ii, 12, 19, 22.

37. "The God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power and strength and glory." Not by his own might had he obtained it, but God had given it to him. One of the greatest facts of this book is that "The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will" (chapter iv, 17, 23, 32). There is nothing good which we possess which God has not given to us (Jas. i, 17); and His gifts are bestowed upon that thereby we may glorify Him. We are expected to glorify the God in whose hands our breath is, and whose are all our ways (chapter v, 23).

38. "And hath made the ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold." We are reminded of the original dominion given to Adam (Gen. i, 28) whereby he was to magnify God; but as he failed, so all his children have failed, and shall fail till he come, the king who shall reign in righteousness, the last Adam who shall subdue all things unto Himself and be king over all the earth (Isa. xxxii, 1; I Cor. xv, 45, 53; Zech. xiv, 9; Rev. xi, 15).

39. "And after these shall arise another, and another, which shall bear rule over all the earth." One great peculiarity of the kingdoms designated by the metals of this image is that they were to have dominion over the known world. Their authority was to be world wide. The two world powers to succeed the Babylonian were, without a possibility of mistake, the Medo-Persian, and then the Grecian. This the Spirit plainly states in chapters v, 28; viii, 20, 27.

40. "And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron, forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all." It is equally clear that the next world wide dominion after the Grecian was the Roman (Luke ii, 1), under whose principles of government all nations may be said to continue. There has been no world wide dominion by any empire since the Roman, nor will there be till the stone kingdom of the Lord Jesus is established on earth.

41, 42. "And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes part of potters clay and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; partly strong and partly broken." There will be power mixed up with that which is wholly of man; power in the hands of the people having no internal stability, though something is left of the strength of the iron. (Tregelles.)

43. "And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men." This seems to refer to Gen. vi, 2, where the marriages of the seed of the godly Seth with the daughters of ungodly Cain are described in similar words. The reference, therefore, seems to be to the blending of the Christianized Roman empire with the pagan nations, a deterioration being the result. Charlemagne and Napoleon made an effort to reunite the parts into one great empire, but in vain. Christ alone shall effect that. (Fausset.)

44. "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed." "These kings" signify the final state of the Roman empire, represented by the ten toes. They cannot mean the four successive monarchies, as they do not coexist as the holders of power. If the fourth had been meant, the singular, not the plural, would be used. The falling of the stone on the image must mean destroying judgment on the fourth Gentile power, not gradual evangelization of it by grace, and the destroying judgment cannot be dealt by Christians, for they are taught to submit to the powers that be, so that it must be dealt by Christ Himself at His coming again. (Tregelles.)

45. "The great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter; and the dream is certain and the interpretation sure." That Christ shall break in pieces the kingdoms of this world when He returns in power and glory is unmistakably clear from such passages as Ps. ii, 8, 9; cxlix, 5-9; Rev. ii, 26, 27; xi, 15-18; xix, 11-15. His kingdom will end and supersede all the others, and shall not, like the Babylonian, Medo-Persian and Grecian, pass to others, but it shall stand forever. That the kingdom which was at hand when He came in His humiliation was not then set up, but postponed till His return, is evident from Luke xix, 11, 12. The establishment of His kingdom is sure because it is the work of the Lord of Hosts, who hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand (Isa. xiv, 24).

46. "Then the king Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face and worshiped Daniel." That Daniel would not tolerate this we conclude from the conduct of Paul and Barnabas when in a certain place the people would have sacrificed unto them (Acts xiv, 15). And also from the conduct of the angel when John fell at his feet to worship him (Rev. xxii, 8, 9).

47. "The king answered unto Daniel and said." This seems to imply that Daniel protested against the king's worshiping him, and hence the king honors Daniel's God, saying, "Of a truth it is that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldst reveal this secret." Thus the king glorified God in Daniel (Gal. i, 24). To reject all praise of self, and seek not honor

from man, but earnestly desire that God in all things may be glorified, this is the only true Christian life (II Cor. v, 15; John v, 44; I Pet. iv, 11).

48. "Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler." This is all in an earthly and apparent sense. Daniel was already great in the sight of God and had received great gifts from Him (chapter i, 17; Luke i, 15). But Daniel no doubt recognized the hand of God in this earthly promotion and would glorify God there as well as in a more lowly position.

49. "Daniel sat in the gate of the king." He did not forget his faithful friends, but obtained positions of honor for them also, but Daniel was over all. Very suggestive is this remarkable story of a Jew thus exalted by a Gentile world power.

THE DUTY OF MEETING TOGETHER.

Churchgoing Necessary to a True Christian Life.

We are commanded not to forget the assembling of ourselves together. One cannot disregard this injunction without serious loss. The absorbing worldly cares that belong to an age of intense pressure like the present only serve to enforce the command. The gates of Zion are wide open everywhere, and no one, especially in this Christian land, can offer a reasonable excuse for neglect to obey it. When we consider God's commands we find that duty and privilege are always intimately associated. Worship, public or social, is not an exception to this rule. How is this made clear to every one?

John Ruskin has said, "Every duty we omit obscures some truth we should have known." It is easy to illustrate this remark, both from observation and experience. Who can estimate the losses that are sure to follow an unwarranted absence from associated worship? Because Thomas was not with the other disciples when the Lord appeared in their midst, he missed the comfort and strength which they enjoyed. How certain this will be the result if we neglect the companionship and holy exercises of the saints. The limited number present will not justify this neglect, for Christ hath said, "Where two or three have met in my name, there am I in the midst." Nothing but a providential interposition ought to be deemed a sufficient reason for nonattendance upon the Lord's house, when we remember that the knowledge of God to be obtained through worship is the one "pearl of great price."

To omit this duty without just reasons is to live on with beclouded minds as to the divine character of wisdom and love. Where can such views be assured better than while engaged in worship with the saints? God desires us to know the attributes of his nature that would win our hearts. His holy songs and united supplications in earthly temples serve to break earth's spell for the time and assist us to "mount on wings as eagles." His presence is then a real, heartfelt possession. We then see him, adore him and delight to dwell upon the manifestations of his character.

How true is all this in respect to Christ's atoning work. "I have never seen Jesus so willing and able to save me as now," exclaimed a thoughtful, devout church attendant on returning home from the sanctuary recently. "Oh, those blessed songs, those pulpit intercessions offered by our pastor, those clear interpretations of the word concerning Christ, the Saviour of sinners, all served to bring him to my mind with sweetness and power." And it might have been added that the holy atmosphere of the temple favored the soul's withdrawal from earthly anxieties, and helped to a better view of Jesus, the Master and Lord.

It is sad to reflect how many there are who hold these and kindred truths with vague uncertainty, all because they are unwilling to place themselves under such favorable conditions. In this world of excitement and subtle temptation to wrongdoing, how necessary it is to cherish the churchgoing spirit. So long as we truly say with the psalmist, "My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for thy courts," we are safe whatever may befall us.—Christian Advocate.

Conscience.

Conscience is either the best friend on earth or the greatest enemy on earth. And man had better have all the world against him than have his conscience against him, and if all the world be against a man, yet if his conscience be for him, if his conscience befriend him, it will enable him to bear up with comfort.—Samuel Slater.

How We Are Ruined.

We are ruined, not by what we really want, but by what we think we do; therefore never go abroad in search of your wants. If they be real wants they will come home in search of you, for he that buys what he does not want will soon want what he cannot buy.—Colton.

Where God's Battles Are Fought.

The great battlefields of the world are in the hearts of men. The great struggles are within. A soul once committed to God and his cause finds in its fierce fights a field of glory where grand victories may be won and peace be found.—H. W. Thomas.

Doors.

All the doors that lead inward to the secret place of the Most High are doors outward—out of self, out of smallness, out of wrong.—George McDonald.

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